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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1. RATIONALE

English plays an important role in our lives. Thanks to this language, we can belong to the whole world as well as to our own country and especially using idioms is very important in every day communication following reasons.

Firstly, idioms play an important part in a language both in written and spoken forms. Using idioms in communication is the most effective and interesting way because they contain not only the literal meanings but the figurative and expressive meanings as well.

Secondly, idioms give us many difficulties in communication. The listeners and readers also find it really hard to understand idioms because their meanings cannot often be deduced from the individual components. Idioms are used both in written and spoken language to emphasize meaning and make our observation, judgment and explanations are more lively and interesting, so they have aesthetic function.

Moreover, words relating to teaching, learning, and examination are available in the basic vocabulary stock of both English and Vietnamese.

Lastly, as an English teacher, I find that students of English only stop at using non-idiomatic ways of expressing ideas.

For all the reasons above, we decide to choose to study about Idioms Relating to Education in English and Vietnamese. We hope that with the thesis, we can contribute a small part to help students of English as well as Vietnamese people who learn English and who are interested in idioms.

1.2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.2.1. Aims

The study aims to make a contrast of syntactic and semantic features of English and Vietnamese idioms relating to Education (IsE). Hopefully, the findings will help English learners improve their knowledge of English and Vietnamese IsE and also help them understand the cultural characteristics of English and Vietnamese people via the idioms.

1.2.2. Objectives

In this thesis, we try to reach the following objectives:

- providing a collection of English and Vietnamese IsE.
- describing syntactic and semantic features of English and Vietnamese IsE.
- exploring the similarities and differences of English and Vietnamese IsE.
- presenting some suggestions for English language teaching and translation.

1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the syntactic features of English and Vietnamese IsE?

2. What are the semantic features of English and Vietnamese IsE?

3. What are the similarities and differences in syntactic and semantic characteristics of IsE in English versus Vietnamese?
1.4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Hopefully, doing a research of Idioms Relating to Education in English versus Vietnamese will be a contribution to the present recognition of the field. And the findings of a contrastive analysis of English and Vietnamese IsE will be expected as great benefits for Vietnamese learners of English.

With In-depth interpretation of what is really meant in IsE, syntactically and semantically mastering how to apply this kind of idioms in sensible ways, learners will be able to improve their understanding of the field and get the final effective communication.

1.5. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Due to the limitation of time, knowledge and shortage of materials, we only conduct research on idioms relating to terms for Education in English versus Vietnamese and mainly focus on the structure and meaning of idioms relating to terms for Education in English and Vietnamese.

1.6. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The study is organized into five chapters: Chapter 1 is Introduction; Chapter 2 is Literature Review and Theoretical Background; Chapter 3 is Method and Procedure; Chapter 4 is Findings of Discussions; Chapter 5 is Conclusion and Implications.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW
AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many linguists started studying English idioms since the beginning of the twentieth century. Some authors have made great contributions to the collection of English idioms such as:


In terms of Vietnamese idioms, many Vietnamese authors had long researches and gave out worthy collections such as: Lương Văn Đăng, Nguyễn Lực with "Thành ngữ Tiếng Việt (published in 1979), Hoàng Văn Hành, Nguyễn Như Y and Phan Xuân Thành with "Kê chuyển thành ngữ tục ngữ", volume 1,2,3 (published in 1998, 1991), Vũ Dung with " Từ điển thành ngữ và tục ngữ Việt Nam" (published in 1993).

Besides, some M.A these in Danang University also focused on this field. In most of these studies, linguistic features of idioms related to many topics in two languages, English and Vietnamese has been taken into consideration. For example, "A Study of Some Characteristics of Structure, Meaning and Culture of English Idioms About Animals" by Phạm Thị Tố Như (1998), "A Contrastive Analysis of English and Vietnamese Idioms Using the Terms of Human Body Parts" by Nguyễn Thị Hiệp (2001), "Semantic Features of English and Vietnamese Idiomatic Verb Phrases" by English and Vietnamese Idioms Containing Verbs of Motion" by Nguyễn Thị Phương Thu (2008), etc.

All in all, the above authors have presented every aspect related to idioms. However, up to now none studies on the linguistic features of idioms relating to terms for teaching, learning and examination in English and Vietnamese. This reason makes me to devote myself to the study to investigate into this topic.

2.2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.2.1. Definition of Terms

2.2.1.1. Definitions of Idioms

According to “Longman Dictionary of English language and culture”, an idiom is “a fixed phrase that has its own special meanings and it is impossible to guess the meanings from separated words”.

According to Oxford Dictionary [127], “a group of words in a fixed order that have a particular meaning that is different from the meanings of each word understood by its own” is called an idiom.

Cowie [11] defines that an idiom is "a group of words with set meanings that cannot be calculated by adding up the separate meaning not deducible from those of the separate words..."

As for Cruse [14] an idiom is defined as "an expression the meaning of which cannot be inferred from the meaning of its parts".

Hoàng Phê [83] states that an idiom is considered to be “a set of expression whose meaning is generally inexplicable simply through the meanings of individual words it contains”.

Hoàng Văn Hành [72] defines an idiom as “a stable word group with a solid formation and structure, and a complete and figurative meaning, used in everyday communication, especially in spoken language”.

According to Đại Xuân Ninh [82],"An idiom is a set of expressions whose constituents lose their independence to some extent and combined into a rather complete and stable unit”.

Idioms, like proverbs, are common sayings. However, they usually do not make sense at first sight and do not offer any advice. For example, *to sting to the quick* that means to make someone angry.
So that idioms are fixed expressions that are commonly used. They are not complete sentences but words – An idiom is equal to a phrase...

Idioms do not give comments, experiences, a moral lesson, advice that make idioms aesthetic not educated, that is the reason why an idiom does not become a literary work – idioms belong to the language. Therefore, idioms do not bring about the full understanding about lives and any lessons of the people’s relationships in the society.

2.2.1.2. Definition of Education idioms
According to the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2000), Education is defined as “a process of teaching, training and learning, especially in schools or colleges to improve knowledge and develop skills.” Therefore, we can work out the definition of the term “Idioms Relating to Education” represent a kind of idioms relating to or concerning the process of teaching, training and learning, especially in schools or colleges to improve knowledge and develop skills. Besides, IsE is a special group which the terms in idioms sometimes have no relation to teaching, training and learning, etc.

2.2.2. Overview of the Phrase Structures
2.2.2.1. Adjective Phrases
2.2.2.2. Noun Phrases
2.2.2.3. Verb Phrases and Phrasal Verb
2.2.2.4. Prepositional Phrases
2.2.3. Main Features of Idioms
2.2.3.1. Structural Features
2.2.3.2. Semantic Features
2.2.3. Idioms and Other Language Units

Idioms bear some syntactic and semantic resemblance with other phraseology units in the language, which sometimes cause some difficulties to distinguish this unit from the others. The confusion usually exists between idioms and phrases, collocations, proverbs and clichés.

2.2.4. Idioms and Free word groups
2.2.4.1. Idioms and Proverbs
2.2.4.2. Idioms and Collocations
2.2.5. Culture and Language
2.2.5.1. Concepts of Culture
2.2.5.2. The Relation of Culture and Language
CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter aims at dealing with method and procedure of the study. It consists of the presentation of the aims and objectives of the study, the methods used in the course of the study which support each other in investigating data and finding the results. It also mentions the procedures in which the problems related to the study are solved, leading to the final results. In addition, how data are collected and analyzed are also presented in this chapter. The reliability and validity are mentioned as well.

3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the aims and objectives, in this study, descriptive and contrastive methods are mainly utilized.

The descriptive method is used to describe in details the syntactic and semantic features through the examples of idioms with IsE collected from referent books, stories, novels, dictionaries and Internet websites.

In addition, the contrastive method could be used to identify the similarities and differences in the syntactic and semantic features of idioms relating to Education in English and Vietnamese.

3.2. PROCEDURES

To begin with, data will be collected from references from English and Vietnamese dictionaries, stories, and the Internet, etc. Then, collected data will be classified into categories depending on their syntactic, semantic features and their functions. Next, linguistic description and analysis is given to each category to clarify the characteristics of the uses of English and Vietnamese Idioms relating to Education. Finally, the obtained data will be compared in great detail to show the similarities and differences between English and Vietnamese idioms relating to Education. Also, implications for English learning and teaching will be given out.

3.3. DATA COLLECTION

The main materials used in the study are collected from the following major sources:

- The bilingual magazines, novels and short stories and literature books.
- The grammar books written by English and Vietnamese linguists.
- The English-Vietnamese and Vietnamese-English dictionaries.
- English journals.
- The Internet webpages.

3.4. DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected is analyzed both qualitative and quantitative. First, the idioms will be analyzed in term of syntax and semantics. Then, presenting and describing English and Vietnamese idioms relating to Education in terms of structure and meaning. Finally, similarities and differences between English and Vietnamese idioms relating to Education in terms of their syntactic and semantic features basing on the statistic and contrastive methods.
CHAPTER 4
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
4.1. SYNTACTIC FEATURES OF ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE IDIOMS RELATING TO EDUCATION

4.1.1. Syntactic Glimpse at English and Vietnamese Idioms Relating to Education

4.1.1.1. Education Idioms in the Structure of a Verb Phrase

In form of verb phrases, idioms relating to Education in the analyzed material are found in English with general patterns such as Verb + Noun/Noun Phrase; Verb + Noun/Noun Phrase + Adverb Phrase; Verb + somebody/something + Noun/Noun Phrase; Verb + Prepositional Phrase; To Be + Noun/Noun Phrase; Verb + and + Verb.

Vietnamese idioms also owns many idioms relating to Education in form of verb phrase with some patterns such as Verb + Noun/Noun Phrase; Verb + Noun/Noun Phrase + Verb + Noun/Noun Phrase; Verb + Adjective + Verb + Adjective; Verb + Noun + Prepositional Phrase.

In sum, it is clear from the above analysis of the structure of verb phrase of idioms relating to Education are many in both English and Vietnamese. English idiomatic verb phrases are more complicated than the Vietnamese ones. This proves that there are more structures in verb phrases found in English than in Vietnamese. This can be shown in the following table.

4.1.1.2. Education Idioms in the Structure of a Noun Phrase

Noun phrase structures of English idioms relating to Education account for a significant number of idioms collected. After being analyzed, they are divided into groups including general patterns of Noun/Noun Phrase + Noun/Noun Phrase; Noun Phrase + Preposition + Noun Phrase; Adjective + Noun/Noun Phrase; Noun + and + Noun; Noun's + Noun; Noun Phrase + Gerund + Noun Phrase.

In comparison with English idioms, Vietnamese also owns many IsE but in fewer numbers. In form of noun phrases, idioms relating to have two common pattern such as Noun/Noun Phrase + Noun/Noun Phrase, Noun + Adjective + Noun + Adjective, Noun/Noun Phrase + Verb + Noun/Noun Phrase, Noun + Verb + Noun + Verb.

4.1.1.3. Education Idioms in the Structure of an Adjective Phrase

English idioms relating to informed in adjective phrases occupy little percentage in the total idioms collected. They can have some common patterns such as Adjective + Preposition + Noun/Noun Phrase; as + Adjective + as + Noun/Noun Phrase.

In Vietnamese, only a few idioms have adjective phrase with two patterns such as Adjective + nhur + Noun/ Noun Phrase, Adjective + Noun/ Noun Phrase, Adjective + Noun/ Noun Phrase.

4.1.1.4. Education Idioms in the Structure of a Prepositional Phrase
Prepositional phrase structures of English idioms relating to account for a significant number of idioms collected. After being analyzed, they are divided into groups including general patterns of Preposition + (Possessive Adjective) + Noun/ Noun Phrase, Preposition + Prepositional Phrase.

According to Diệp Quang Ban, Prepositional phrases are not typical ones in Vietnamese because prepositions are not main parts of speech in Vietnamese. As a result, the structures of prepositional phrases in Vietnamese do not contain in idioms in Vietnamese, just in English.

4.1.2. The Structures of English and Vietnamese Idioms Relating to Education

4.1.2.1. Parallel Structures
4.1.2.2. Comparative Structures
4.1.2.2. Borrowed idioms

In brief, we have just discussed some possible patterns of the syntactic features of English and Vietnamese idioms. The table 4.5 below summed up the patterns idioms relating to Education in both languages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENGLISH</th>
<th>VIETNAMESE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[6] Verb + and + Verb</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[12] Noun Phrase + Gerund + Noun Phrase</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As we can see in the table above, idioms in form of verb phrases in English as well as in Vietnamese account for the largest percentage (40.1% in English and 44.2% in Vietnamese), noun phrases take the second place with 34.2% in English and 32.7% in Vietnamese. Also, Vietnamese people use more idioms relating to Education in form of adjective phrases than English people (7.4% in English and 17.6%). In form of prepositional phrases, there are 32 idioms in English, accounting for 15.8% while there is not one of this form in Vietnamese. Of comparative structures, we investigate samples and see that comparative structures in Vietnamese are nearly double in comparison with English but there is a small percentage (2.5% in English and 5.5% in Vietnamese).

4.1.3. Similarities and Differences of Syntactic Features of English and Vietnamese Idioms Relating to Education

4.1.3.1 Similarities

This section has provided a general view of syntactic features of idioms relating to Education in English and in Vietnamese. From the structures and two tables 4.5 and 4.6 which we have been presented above, we can see that there are more patterns of syntactic structures in English than those in Vietnamese (16 versus 11). In form of phrase structures, both English and Vietnamese idioms relating to Education have same grammatical system such as verb phrases, noun phrases, and adjective phrases. We can also recognize that some similar patterns of each group of phrase structures can appear in both languages. For examples, in group of verb phrases, the pattern verb + noun/noun phrase appears in both languages or the pattern noun/noun phrase + noun/noun phrase in English can have the similar one in Vietnamese. Apart from these, parallel structures and
comparative structures also appear in both two languages although the amounts are not the same.

**4.1.3.2. Differences**

As we can see, not every idiom in English and Vietnamese shares the same syntactic patterns. With the samples investigated, there are no cases of idiom in the prepositional phrases in Vietnamese in comparison with in English. There are fewer syntactic patterns in English than in Vietnamese (16 versus 11). In addition, the parallel structures and comparative structures are more numerous in Vietnamese idioms relating to Education than English idioms relating to Education in idiom structures. Besides, in every grammatical system there are not same amount of structures although they have same system. What's more, the number of occurrences of English idioms is much larger than those in Vietnamese ones in verb phrases and noun phrases.

**4.2. SEMANTIC FEATURES OF ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE IDIOMS RELATING TO EDUCATION**

**4.2.1. Transference of meaning of idioms relating to Education in English and Vietnamese**

- **4.2.1.1. Simile**
- **4.2.1.2. Metaphor**
- **4.2.1.3. Metonymy**
- **4.2.1.4. Hyperbole**

**4.2.2. Semantic Fields of English and Vietnamese Idioms Relating to Education**

- **4.2.2.1. Relationship between Teachers and Learners**
- **4.2.2.2. School and Class**
- **4.2.2.3. Examinations**
- **4.2.2.4. Methods/ Ways of Teaching and Learning**
- **4.2.2.5. Learners' Personalities/ Appearance**
- **4.2.2.6. Level of Education**

Here, the frequency of figurative characteristics of English and Vietnamese idioms relating to Education can summarized as in Table 4.7.

**Table 4.7. Frequency of Semantic Fields of English and Vietnamese Idioms Relating to Education.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English and Vietnamese Idioms Relating to Education</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Vietnamese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Word group</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Teachers and Learners</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 School and Class</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Examinations</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Methods/ Ways of Teaching and Learning</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Learners' Personalities/ Appearance</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Level of Education</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The statistics in the table 4.7 above shows that Relationship between Teachers and Learners relating to Idioms of Education take the top place with the percentage of 23.8% in English and 23% in Vietnamese (48 versus 38). Learners' Personalities/ Appearance are
mentioned with striking number (33 versus 39). However, there exists a significant difference in the percentage of idioms expressing Learners’ Appearance in Learners’ Personalities/ Appearance is 0% in English and 3% in Vietnamese (0 versus 5). IsE expressing School and Class in English double ones in Vietnamese (11.8% versus 0.6%). The amount of IsE which refer to Examinations and Level of Education are approximately equal around 14.4% and 14.9% in English and in Vietnamese with 19.5% and 14.5%. The same percentage of idioms denoting Methods/ Ways of Teaching and Learning exist in the corpus is 18.8% in both English and Vietnamese.

4.2.3. Similarities and Differences in Semantic Features of English and Vietnamese Idioms Relating to Education

4.2.3.1. Similarities

Idioms beautify the language and establish the characteristic style of each individual language. Idioms play an important role of in each country. In spite of different blood types, different colors of skin and geographic location, the Vietnamese and English, to some extent, share the same outlook to the nature, the people and the society. This leads to the similarities in the ways of expressing ideas and concepts through idioms. Some of English idioms referring to Education listed below have the Vietnamese equivalents show clearly this. For example, English idiom is learn parrot-fashion/ learn by rote and the blind leading the blind in equivalence Vietnamese idiom is học như vật and thằng mù dẫn đắt thằng mù.

Besides both English and Vietnamese idioms referring to Education have the common semantic fields and sub-fields such as Relationship between Teachers and Learners, School and Class, Examination, Methods/ Ways of Teaching and Learning, Learners’ Personalities/ Appearance and Level of Education.

What’s more, both languages use some stylistic devices such as simile, metaphor, metonymy and hyperbole to make a colourful and interesting picture in idioms referring to Education.

4.2.3.2. Differences

England and Vietnam are two different countries. They obviously differ from each other in many aspects. Although each country has its own geographical situation, financial position and social environment, the same thinking and awareness can be expressed by language differently. Idioms belong to language, so the ways of expressing ideas and thoughts through idioms are also different.

The first difference lies in the fact that English civilization is mainly originated from the civilization of ancient Greece and Rome in the Mediterranean. Meanwhile, Vietnam is a nation which spends a long and hard history. Especially, the Feudalism has great influences on the development of the country as well as on the Vietnamese language. Living in that society, Vietnamese people are influenced by confucianism education. This feature is expressed in a majority of Vietnamese idioms in general and idioms of education in particular. For example, nau sủ sôi kinh, hi thành hi hiện, của Khổng sán Trinh, tâm chương trích cử, vinh quy bái tổ, áo gấm về làng and so on.

The second difference is that there are some Vietnamese idioms of which origins come from folk stories such as ăn vóc học hay, cá
vượt Vử Môn, đốt có đuôi (đốt có chuôi), etc while no idioms of this case can be found out in English. Idiom "đốt có đuôi" appeared in exams under the feudalism. At first, the idiom only decried few people who were not so ignorant. They were also people who passed the exams, but after exams, they were gathered and had a formal interview with the King. They were arranged from the highest score to the lowest and wore clothes which the King rewarded. The person who had the lowest position wore long band hat (mũ có dài dải) like "tail", so "có đuôi" was stuck for them. Clearly, after that candidates and the people thought that a person who wore this hat is not better than others. Nowadays, idiom "đốt có đuôi" is widely used in Vietnamese daily conversations to denote anyone who is ignorant.

One more difference is that Vietnamese culture bases on the agriculture, there are some animals and plants in Vietnam not exiting in English IsE. For examples, chuعر như trái trái, chuعر như gà bỏi, học như gà đâ và chía, nước dô dâu vịt, nước dô lá khoai, giảm/ trường vò chuôi, etc.

Beside these typical differences, we can see another difference from the table 4.7, the idioms referring to appearance of learners do not exist in English idioms, only appear in Vietnamese such as dài lòng tôn vãi, bạch diện thư sinh.

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS
5.1. SUMMARY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDY
The research paper is conducted based on valuable reference sources in dictionary, reference books, literary works and materials on the Internet. With the title "Investigation into linguistic features of Idiom Relating to Education in English and Vietnamese", the study has investigated into the syntactic features of IsE in English and Vietnamese. In terms of semantics, Idioms relating to Education are studied in some contexts in the literary works. Then, the similarities and differences of syntax and semantics between the two languages are pointed out. At last, some implications for English teaching and learning are also given out.

5.2. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS
The aim of the study is to investigate the syntactic and semantic features of idioms relating to Education in English and Vietnamese as well as to find out the similarities and differences between them. As we have analyzed, there is a wide variety of structures and meanings of idioms relating to Education in English and Vietnamese.

Syntactically, we have found 15 structures under four types: verb phrase, noun phrase, adjective phrase and prepositional phrase in English and Vietnamese idioms are under verb phrase, noun phrase, adjective phrase with eleven types. What's more, we can group English and Vietnamese idioms relating to Education into three kinds of grammatical features such as the parallel, comparative structures and
borrowed idioms of Vietnamese Education idioms, which account for a large number of the total idioms which are presented.

Semantically, English and Vietnamese idioms referring to Education in the corpus of this study express their meanings via semantic transfer means such as simile, metaphor, metonymy and hyperbole. Besides, the figurative and concrete characteristics of English and Vietnamese idioms relating to Education are also presented in seven fields such as Relationship between Teachers and Learners, School and Class, Examination, Methods/ Ways of Teaching and Learning, Learners' Personalities/ Appearance, and Level of Education.

5.3. IMPLICATIONS FOR ENGLISH TEACHING AND LEARNING

For learners of English, there may be some following suggestions. The first and most important thing is that the teacher should use many idioms appropriately when he/she talks to the learners. In this way, learners will perceive the usefulness of idioms step by step.

Secondly, the teachers should get students to discuss the role of idioms by analyzing some paragraphs or some literary works.

Thirdly, to use the idioms properly, the learners should understand their meaning by the way in that the learners not only have the basic knowledge of language but also have to know much about culture, beliefs, habits, and concepts, etc.

Finally, by organizing some activities such as a competition on idioms and proverbs.

For teachers of English, the following suggestions should be considered in order to get a good teaching result.

The teachers need teach idioms through the context.

Next, teachers should be sensible in dealing with cultural differences to give more precise explanations for the learners.

Then, for the effectiveness in communication tasks on idioms can be grouped in both situations of spoken and written language.

At least, after the learners have been interested in idioms and acquired idioms, the teacher has to apply some techniques to help them use those idioms effectively. There are many techniques to develop students’ skill of using idioms.

5.4. LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Due to the limit of available materials, the limit of the researcher's ability and time budget, the study cannot cover all aspects of the topic.

This study aims at investigating the syntactic and semantic features of IsE in English and Vietnamese in some contexts, which is quite a large subject covering a wide range of considerable aspects. Therefore, I would like to trace some aspects for other researchers to study.

Some suggestions for further studies include:
- A contrastive study of pragmatic and cultural features of English and Vietnamese IsE.
- A contrastive analysis of stylistic features of English and Vietnamese IsE.
- A contrastive study of English Proverbs and IsE.